



# **GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

## **TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**August 23, 2006**

**11:00 a.m. Greensboro, NC**

**Blue Room (County Commissioners' Briefing Room)**

**Old Guilford County Courthouse**

### **ATTENDANCE**

<b>Jim Westmoreland</b>	<b>GDOT / MPO</b>	<b>Brent McKinney</b>	<b>PART</b>
<b>Tyler Meyer</b>	<b>GDOT / MPO</b>	<b>Wayne Davis</b>	<b>NCDOT</b>
<b>Lydia McIntyre</b>	<b>GDOT / MPO</b>	<b>John Hunsinger</b>	<b>NCDOT</b>
<b>Peggy Holland</b>	<b>GDOT / MPO</b>	<b>Mark Kirstner</b>	<b>G.C. Transportation &amp; Mobility Services</b>
<b>Adam Fischer</b>	<b>GDOT</b>	<b>Jesse Day</b>	<b>PTCOG</b>
<b>George Linney</b>	<b>GDOT / GTA</b>	<b>Heidi Galanti</b>	<b>Greensboro Planning</b>

**Jim Westmoreland called the meeting to order at 11:05 am and welcomed the TCC members and extended his gratitude for their leadership in recent project efforts.**

### **Action Items**

#### **1. Approve Minutes of July 26, 2006**

Roger Bardsley moved for approval of the minutes. Bill Bruce seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2006 meeting.

## **Business / Potential Action Items**

### **1. GTA Update**

Jim Westmoreland noted the need to table the agenda item until next month's meeting. The item was tabled as a result of Libby James being out of the office due to health reasons. Westmoreland thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers for James' recovery. On behalf of GTA, Westmoreland advised that the HEAT service kick off was a success with various partners attending the celebration. UNCG has inquired about adding staff and faculty to the service currently being offered to the students. GTA still hopes that N.C. A&T will also join in the partnership to provide the service for free to their students. Ridership numbers for the new service will be provided at the next meeting. George Linney advised, overall the service was doing well. Ridership for the new service was slow the first week of school; however the ridership picked up the second week once classes had begun. Linney noted the UNCG shuttle route, which offers service to campus along Walker Avenue and Spring Garden Street, was doing very well. Jim Westmoreland thanked everyone for their support and hard work.

### **2. BiPed Plan Update**

Tyler Meyer advised of the status of the MPO Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Plan. Staff is currently preparing a final draft document for public review. Meyer noted the rising interest and needs for pedestrians and bicycles in the City. Developing the elements of the plan has been a long term project and has had more interest in the community in the last ten years. The 2000 Bond & 2003 Walkability Policy set the stage for pedestrian and bicycle improvements. The 2030 LRTP set the basic vision for the bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway plans. In addition, Guilford County has been doing greenway planning, which allowed for a greenway system that will be more closely coordinated with the bicycle and pedestrian system.

There has also been an increase in the public health community interest in the past few years. This interest was key in developing the plan with a portion of the funding coming from the Moses Cone Foundation. The Foundation supplied the grant through Action Greensboro to fund the greenways portion of the plan, particularly in the City. The primary financial supporters of the plan were the MPO and the Moses Cone Foundation. Other groups instrumental in the development and implementation of the plan include NCDOT, Guilford County, MPO local towns, and Parks and Recreation Department. Meyer reviewed the process for developing the draft plan, which included technical evaluation and substantial public involvement.

The technical evaluation looked at current conditions which included demographics, destination points, land use, and the systems currently in place. The development of the plan also included an online survey, which allowed for staff to get a sense of the perception of the current system. In addition, the survey results from UNCG on greenways were taken into account.

Nine open house workshops were held throughout the process. In addition, focus groups were held at each of the towns except Pleasant Garden. Pleasant Garden chose to table the meeting until the Town had done initial planning. The public meetings were very successful with getting a substantial amount of input from the public.

Bicycle recommendations were developed by looking at current conditions and future needs for connections. A bicycle level of service, which is an assessment of current conditions, included collecting data on roadway width, traffic volumes, percent of trucks, and roadway grade. The assessment allowed for

staff to look at deficiencies in bicycle facilities and future opportunities for improvements. Improvements included bicycle lanes, edgelines (accommodate intermittent parking as on Florida Street), shoulders (primarily recommended in the county to provide extra width), and shared roadways. Some shared roadways will be a part of a signed bicycle route system, which will replace old routes such as the Battleground Loop. The signed route system will be more functional and hopefully provide a more stable ride.

Next steps include taking input from the system planning phase to a more detailed implementation process. The Plan will be helpful in this step as it prioritized the recommendations.

Pedestrian recommendations involved improvements for the small Towns and the City. Town-level recommendations will include sharing them with the Town officials and will be up to them to implement. The City already has sidewalk projects underway. The recommendations will allow the City to look at long-term improvements and prioritize them. Factors considered in prioritizing will include transit routes, filling in gaps on thoroughfares that connect residential areas to commercial areas, as well as proximity to schools.

The greenways recommendations include a more comprehensive plan which has an extensive network reaching more people. There is a substantial amount of greenway construction recommended including off-road trails and shared use trails.

The implementation process is broken down into series of time frames (short-term, mid-term, and long-term) for each of the plan's elements. The bicycle recommendations include immediate opportunities to implement them with roadway resurfacing and projects on priority corridors. The City has also been working with NCDOT to implement the bicycle lanes. In addition, the plan also makes recommendations on funding.

Overall, the Plan gives a framework or guide for implementing bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway facilities, in a coordinated effort with NCDOT, local governments, and staff. The Plan also includes policy recommendations for enforcement and maintenance strategies.

Meyer advised of the next steps for the public review process. Staff is currently working on completing the final draft document. The document will be distributed to various sites and posted on the MPO Web site. MPO staff is also compiling a condensed version of the Plan. MPO staff expects to bring the plan before the TAC on October 11<sup>th</sup> for adoption. A public meeting is planned to be held during the month of September. The plan will be forwarded to the local governments for consideration, but will be up to them to consider it formally.

Jesse Day inquired about the top priority projects for bicycle lanes. Meyer responded that bicycle improvements are more challenging to prioritize in a two-year period and noted he should take a look the recommendation map and give us comments.

Bill Bruce inquired how much of the recommendations are tied to development. Meyer responded the plan does talk about recommendations for requirements for ordinances and cooperative arrangements or incentives to be used by the local governments for implementation.

Jim Westmoreland thanked everyone for their hard work on developing the plan. Westmoreland further stated that the plan will not be implemented tomorrow, but lays out a vision for the future. In addition,

Westmoreland thanked NCDOT for stepping up to the plate with implementing bicycle improvements, particularly on Church Street.

Meyer also thanked everyone for participating in developing the plan. Heidi Galanti noted the 2025 Comprehensive Plan gave a recommendation to develop this plan, and now it can be checked off the list.

### **3. Proposed Thoroughfare Plan Amendment**

Lydia McIntyre advised of the proposed thoroughfare plan amendment. The amendment package shows a public review date starting August 24<sup>th</sup>, however, the document will go out for public review with the BiPed Plan in early September. Staff had previously briefed the committee on the feasibility study for the Youngs Mill and Florida Street extensions. Recommendations from the completion of the study have prompted the proposed amendments. The proposed amendment includes six changes. The first two changes include the removal of the Florida Street extension and Franklin Boulevard extension. The Franklin Boulevard extension is proposed for deletion as a result of it impacting a site slated for a future farm pavilion on N.C. A&T's farm. Currently the Florida Street extension begins at E. Lee Street and extends on new location over to McConnell Road and terminates at Clapps Farm Road. MPO staff worked closely with N.C. A&T to develop an alignment to lessen the impact to the farm. This coordination resulted in the third change, which proposes to route the extension on new location around the outskirts of N.C. A&T property and tying into existing McConnell Road. As a result of the extension being routed along McConnell Road, the fourth proposed change is to reclassify McConnell from a minor thoroughfare to a major thoroughfare from the new extension to I-40 / Business 85. The route would continue northwards on Clapp Farms Road, which would result in the fifth change to add it to the Thoroughfare Plan as a major thoroughfare. The sixth proposed change would further extend Holts Chapel Road from the Youngs Mill extension northward to US 70. This amendment resulted from discussions with the Mixed Use Corporate Park Committee. Tyler Meyer noted the proposed amendment to the Florida Street extension would have fewer impacts and be easier to implement.

John Hunsinger inquired where the Holts Chapel Road ties in on US 70. Mark Kirstner noted it was tying in at Willow Lake Road. Hunsinger noted a shopping center is planned across from the tie in. Jim Westmoreland inquired if there was an alignment on the Collector Plan which would allow a connection from Clapps Farms Road to Holts Chapel Road. It was noted that Naco Road, a collector road, would be extended eastward across the Holts Chapel extension and travel southward to McConnell Road.

Jim Westmoreland inquired about where the Mixed Use Corporate Park was located. Heidi Galanti noted the Park is shown on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan in the center of the proposed amendment and includes over 5,000 acres. Westmoreland also noted that hopefully the MPO staff can continue to work with N.C. A&T to work out a better alignment for the Florida Street extension to support future development. The proposed amendment will be brought back for TAC approval on October 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **4. Battleground Corridor Study Update**

Lydia McIntyre presented the update for the Battleground Corridor Study. McIntyre described the project as evaluating Battleground Avenue between Fernwood Drive and Pembroke / Green Valley Road. The study had two goals: reconfiguring the intersection where Lawndale, Battleground Avenue, and Westover Terrace come together and safely routing the Battleground Rail Trail through the corridor. Nine alternatives were developed while working with an internal stakeholder committee. Criteria used in evaluating the alternatives included improving traffic flow; minimizing impact to businesses, and ease of trail integration. A public involvement component was not a part of the study, but 50 surveys were sent

out to businesses along the study corridor. The MPO received 18 surveys back in which business owners agreed there was a problem, but emphasized the need to maintain access to their businesses.

There are nine alternatives, four of which are recommended for further study. Jim Westmoreland noted the alternatives were done at a 50,000-foot level and have not been reviewed by the public yet. The alternatives represent a preliminary effort to accommodate future traffic as well as the trail. The first alternative is the no-build with the routing of the trail through the area. Each alternative was evaluated from a pedestrian perspective and therefore included tunnels to provide safe pedestrian crossings. The second alternative would grade-separate Lawndale Drive from Battleground Avenue, which would eliminate conflict points. The alternative does require further travel to go from Lawndale Drive south on Battleground. The alternatives also add additional lanes to address future traffic growth. Adam Fischer noted the alternative also shows Cornwallis closed to through traffic. The third alternative is known as the elongated traffic circle which Chris Spencer worked closely with MPO staff to develop. Spencer particularly worked to develop a design at each end of the circle to minimize delay at the points of entry and exiting. In this alternative the trail would be routing through the center and would primarily be above ground. The first 3 alternatives would cost \$9.4 million, \$10.2 million, and \$11.8 million, respectively. The last alternative includes an extensive bridge grade separating Battleground Avenue. The bridge would extend from just north of the Battleground / Lawndale intersection and tie back in at Green Valley Road and had the highest cost, at \$25 million. The elimination of the five alternatives was due to their impacts on business along the corridor. Heidi Galanti inquired which alternative had the least impact. McIntyre responded that Alternative 1 (no-build) would have the least impact, but of the build alternatives, the elongated circle and grade separation were almost even in terms of impacts.

Next steps include looking further at alternatives for detail analysis, extending the study limits further south to the Wendover Avenue Interchange, and including a public involvement component. The improvements will very likely be done in phases, with the trail being implemented first. Jim Westmoreland noted trying to meet the goals of this study was challenging, but a fun process. Westmoreland also noted the study offered an opportunity to look at getting the trail routed through the area.

## **5. Project Updates**

Lydia McIntyre advised of an update on the R-4707 project (US 29/Reedy Fork Parkway Interchange upgrade). The MPO is developing the environmental document with oversight from NCDOT. Tasks 1-4 have been completed and NCDOT recently approved Task 5. Task 5 is the purpose and needs statement, which explains why the project is needed. The purpose of the project is to upgrade the facility to meet future growth from the Reedy Fork Development and to accommodate the future I-785. The project will be going before the Merger Team on September 21<sup>st</sup> and will be looking to get agreement on concurrence points 1 (purpose and need) and 2 (alternatives carried forward). Five alternatives were evaluated, but only two are being recommended to be carried forward. The diamond interchange and tight partial cloverleaf interchange were deleted as a result of impacts to streams and wetlands. The two alternatives recommended to be carried forward include the Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) and the partial cloverleaf interchange. The interchanges have been moved further southward to allow adequate spacing with the proposed interchange at Brown Summit.

Jim Westmoreland inquired about a timeline to complete the project. McIntyre responded the timeline would depend largely on whether the project will have to continue through merger or not. Tyler Meyer noted the development of the document has been lengthy, but appears to be better since funding is currently not available for the project.

Once the document is complete it will become a shelf project and when funding does become available it will be ready to move to construction.

MPO staff is planning to hold a Stakeholder / Local Officials meeting prior to the public informational meeting tentatively set for September 14<sup>th</sup>.

## **6. MPO Strategic Reports**

Tyler Meyer advised that NCDOT will release the Draft TIP on September 7<sup>th</sup>. The overall process will probably be completed in December 2007. MPO staff will bring an update on the Draft TIP at the next meeting. MPO staff will prepare materials for public review and hold public meetings. John Hunsinger noted that the MPOs may have brief negotiation sessions, while the RPO may not get the opportunity.

Lydia McIntyre advised that the Collector Plan would be taken before the County Commissioners on the day following the TCC meeting. The MPO has received approval from all localities except the Towns of Oak Ridge and Stokesdale. Pleasant Garden chose to not to approve their plan at this time.

John Hunsinger handed out NCDOT project update list for the Greensboro Urban Area. Hunsinger noted it includes not only TIP projects, but also projects funded by other sources. The list includes projects on the 12 month letting list and will be provided at future MPO meetings.

Jesse Day stated there will be a ride on the new bike lanes on September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:30am.

Bill Bruce stated that the County's TRC meeting was held the day prior to the TCC. A request was made by Brightwood Farm developer to revise the unified development plan to remove the crossing from Rock Creek to the Brightwood Farms development. Bruce noted the members of the TRC asked if Greensboro and Burlington could work together to find funding for the connection which crosses a stream. The project is located in the unincorporated area of the County. Jim Westmoreland noted the MPO would look at the subject crossing.

Jim Westmoreland gave comments on the Seamless Mobility Study which looks at how the transit services can be delivered more collectively. A meeting was held at PART around implementing a consolidated system in the Triad through a MOU. NCDOT offer technical and financial support to implement a consolidated system. The agencies represented agreed consolidation may not be appropriate at this time, but it was something that the group would continue to evaluate. Brent McKinney noted the consolidation could result in cost savings and an additional revenue streams. McKinney also noted certain issues would need to be addressed such as agencies being union or non-union. Tyler Meyer commented looking at the regional system was timely in terms of PART's major investment study and the region's future vision for transit.

Jim Westmoreland commented on the continuation of discussion of toll roads in the General Assembly in Raleigh at the NCDOT, and the legislation that was passed recently on I-540 in Raleigh. The legislation changed the implementation of toll roads in terms of placing tolls on existing facilities. Westmoreland suggested the MPO staff should invite the Director of the Toll Roads Committee to a future meeting.

Pam Hawley noted there would be an inter-city route from Greensboro to Boone starting August 24<sup>th</sup> to be provided by PART.

The TCC was adjourned at 12:45pm.